

## THE POST CARD READING CLUB.

ONCE more I must lament a most melancholy dearth of post cards. I believe that the long pauses between our issues and the erratic dates have much to answer for. I appeal to your better natures! Will those of you who, on reading this, feel that they would care to belong *then and there* sit down and write me a post card to say so? Then I would undertake to notify all members a fortnight before the post cards were needed. I should be grateful and thankful for suggestions as to books and post card criticisms of any books which you had read and appreciated. All communications had better be addressed to Miss Pennethorne, Mayfield, Maidstone.

For next term I should suggest some of the following books:—

*Renaissance Types.* W. S. Lilly.

(Studies of Michael Angelo, Sir Thomas More, Erasmus, Luther, etc.)

*The Mystery of Mary Stuart.* Andrew Lang.

*Anticipations.* Wells.

*The Rulers of the South.* F. M. Crawford.

(The story of Sicily under Greek, Carthaginian, and Roman rule.)

*Turkey in Europe.* Odessyus.

(A study of the different races and their present condition in the Turkish Empire.)

The following post cards have been received:—

*The Life of the Bee.* Maeterlinck.

*The Life of the Bee* is a charmingly-written exposition of the life and habits of the domestic bee. The author brings to his subject personal knowledge, an open mind, and a soul that sees into the realities of things. As we enter at the door of the hive a veil seems lifted, and we enter a region pervaded by mysterious laws of order and beauty, where the great life principle of "the one for the many" is realized in its most perfect conception. That mysterious law, "the spirit of the

hive," which pervades every member, and to which each one sacrifices labour, time, and even life itself—to the future good of the whole—leaves one lost in wonder and admiration. The most sceptical cannot but pause and think upon the nature of that compelling power, call it by what name we will, flowering in that enchanting and mysterious borderland between instinct and reason. One is struck all through the book by the remarkable combination in one man of the poet, the mystic, and the man of science, though an air of mysticism and wonder pervades it all, thereby adding greatly to its charm.

E. M. E. W.

*Kim.* Rudyard Kipling.

A vivid book; to use a well-worn metaphor, a many-sided sparkling, clear-cut gem. Is it not at the same time a thrilling tale of adventure, spicy and piquant à la Sherlock Holmes; a more or less faithful sketch of the inner mechanism of a complex government; a series of brilliant word-paintings of some of mighty India's infinitely varied landscapes and peoples; an illustration of the great problem as to Western civilization in the East; a most interesting chapter in practical education; and above all a study in religion? The Llama is to me a personification of man's natural aspiration Godward. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness, he cannot be satisfied with the "filthy rags" of his own holiness, his saintly life of self-renunciation, of good works, and of meditation does not suffice, with steady faith he seeks a "River of Cleansing" where he shall, by a God-ordained miracle, receive the free gift of salvation, which is the forgiveness of sins. He yearns for the good tidings, but half consciously, not like so many thousands, blindly and dumbly. The criticism that the Picturesque is enthroned in the place of Beauty, that the main incident depends on accidental and peculiar properties (idiosyncrasies) applies, I think, to most of the characters and situations of this book, but *here* at least we have the interest excited by a typical essential property of human nature, here we have surely reached the firmer foundation for Art's Edifice, the changeless Heart of Man.

F. C. A.



*The Life of the Bee.* Maeterlinck.

The work of a genius, but of a profound pessimist. He invests the personality of one of the happiest and cheeriest of Nature's insects with his own sadness. One is deeply interested, nay, absorbed in this wonderful scientific and philosophical work, but having finished and closed the book, one turns with relief to the optimism of Ruskin, who reminds us that the worker gains happiness, not in proportion as he is able to reap his reward at once, but in proportion to the energy and vitality which he manifests in his work. Maeterlinck, like Buffon, is too anthropometric, but we must not forget to be grateful for the depth and accuracy of his information.

D. N.

*The Soul of a People.*

An intensely sympathetic reading of the mind of a conquered race. The absolute childlike simplicity of the politics of the Burmese is beautifully expressed. Our hearts go out to the girlish queen who would not believe in failure.

The Beauty of pure Buddhism, if this worship of Life and Beauty can be called so, is vividly set before us. The absolute ethical teaching, and the quiet philosophy that accepts an Allah whose Will is Perfection, therefore to be worshipped not petitioned; the love of Nature and living things make us feel all reverence for this old-young nation that possesses such characteristics.

E. C. A.

*The Story of the Bee.*

Brilliant, fascinating, ideal, realistic. What pictures of real socialism, true government, ideal industry, devotion, patience and fortitude! It is hard to say what part of the book appeals to us most. Its faithful record of the genius of instinct, the beauty of its descriptions of natural phenomena, or its ideal city that is sketched with the back of the brush as it were under the real city of the Bee.

What a pity we cannot all keep bees in glass hives in our living rooms, but it takes eyes like those of this naturalist-philosopher to read what that hive contains.

E. C. A.

*Kim.*

Western acuteness and Eastern simplicity. Ambition and Contemplation. The minds of men and the laws of philosophy. How real is this beautiful, faithful old Llama, moving with true Eastern deliberation through slow moving India, in search of his river of Life. And his disciple, Irish, yet Hindu. All the vivid life of a boy, a soldier's son, who would win a place among the mighty of India who read the unwritten records of that mysterious land, yet with such respect for his Master, such love and reverence for him, that no son of his race could have given more. A book that is much more than a story or a series of pictures—a lesson in the true realities of life.

E. C. A.

*Kim.*

One marvels at the genius of the man who can portray such characters as those in this book. As if the author had passed in transmigration through the experiences of each, so he seems to know from the inside the lives and thoughts of all. Could any civilized human being be more old-world or un-English in his mode of life and thought than the Llama and yet how real, how human, he is, how he is made to stand out before and to appeal to our sympathies. One loses oneself in this book. The road, the train, the villages, and particularly the wonderful mountains are so real that we can hardly feel that Kipling has described them to us. Rather he has used his book as the magic carpet of the Arabian Nights to carry us away, to lift us up and to let us look over and see India stretched out beneath us.

D. N.